(CNPC) even though the ONGC Videsh-Mittal combine bid was higher than the CNPC;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any action in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) As per the procedure laid down by PetroKazakhstan for sale of its shares, any bidder has the right to offer higher value for the stake than the highest bid received by them. Making use of this provision, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) made a superior offer to the seller and won the bid.

Although under the same provision, ONGC-Mittal Joint Venture had the right to further submit a superior bid, considering the various techno-economic and commercial aspects of the deal, they decided not to do so.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) to (c) above.

Allotment of petrol pumps in Andhra Pradesh

680. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of petrol pumps allotted by public sector oil companies in Andhra Pradesh during the last two years;

(b) the number of cases in which No Objection Certificates for setting up of petrol pumps were sought from the district collectors in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) the details of criteria used for allowing the setting up of petrol pumps;

(d) whether any complaint has been received about violations of these criteria in Andhra Pradesh during the last one year; and

(e) if so, the detail thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) & (b) During the last two years, i.e. 2003-04 and 2004-05, the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), *viz.* Indian

Oil Corporation Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and IBP Co. Limited, allotted 706 retail outlets (petrol pumps) in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Out of this, in 686 cases the OMCs sought 'no objection certificates' (NOC) from District Collectors in the State.

(c) In order to establish a retail outlet, OMCs have to obtain NOCs from the District Collector/Magistrate or the Commissioner of Police, as the case may be, and a licence from the Department of Explosives, Government of India, for storage and sale of the products. If the retail outlet location is situated on a National Highway, a separate approval needs to be taken from the National Highway Authority of India.

(d) As reported by the OMCs, no complaint about violation of criteria for setting up retail outlets in the State of Andhra Pradesh has been received by them during the last year, i.e., 2004-05.

(e) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (d) above.

Obstacles to Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project

†681. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that General Electric Company, America has refused to provide LNG related vital equipment to Tehran;

(b) if so, to what extent it will adversely affect Indo-Iran-gas-pipeline project;

(c) whether Government have contemplated any alternative plan under the circumstances; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) There were news reports to the effect that General Electric (GE) company has refused to supply crucial equipments for the LNG project to Iran on account of US sanctions on Iran, and that, as a consequence, Iran may not be in a position to fulfil its commitments of supplying the agreed LNG quantities to India.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.